Endemic Amphibians and Their Distribution in China

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Abstract Amphibians are good indicators of ecosystem health. Updating the information of endemic species in time and understanding their spatial distributions are necessary for the development of integrative conservation strategies and the elucidation of geographic patterns of amphibians. We analyzed the diversity and distributions of the endemic amphibians in China based on a database of specimen records, recently published literature, and field surveys. Two hundred and sixty two endemic species of amphibians, belonging to 59 genera in 12 families and two orders, are recognized. They account for 67% of the total number of amphibian species in China, with the family Megophryidae possessing the largest number of endemics. There are also 17 genera endemic to China. Across provinces, the species richness of endemics shows five levels with a hierarchical diversification. Sichuan has the largest number of endemics, while Heilongjiang and Jilin have no endemic species. Alternatively, whether on the level of endemic genus or species, the highest diversity occurs in the Western Mountains and Plateau Subregion. The distribution ranges of most endemic species cover ≤ 4 provinces or zoogeographic subregions. Additionally, the species richness of endemics along an elevational gradient shows a bell-shaped pattern with the peak around 800 m. Most endemic species are distributed in areas of low to mid elevation (c. 700-1 500 m), while 36 species are distributed up to 3 000 m. Endemic species richness decreases with increasing of elevation range. Species at mid elevations display large range sizes, while species at lower and higher elevations exhibit smaller ranges. Our results are to be beneficial for further exploration of the underlying mechanisms of distributional patterns of amphibians in China. This study highlights a need to promote conservation programs for Chinese endemic amphibians due to their narrow distribution ranges and potential threats.

Keywords amphibian diversity, conservation, distribution pattern, elevational gradient, endemic species

1. Introduction

Amphibians, considered good indicators of ecosystem health, are experiencing population declines and many are approaching extinction globally and rapidly (Stuart *et al.*, 2004; Wake and Vredenburg, 2008). Threats contributing to the decline include habitat loss, alien species, over-exploitation, global climate change, environmental chemicals and emerging infectious diseases (Collins and Storfer, 2003; Xie *et al.*, 2007). At least 43.2% of amphibian species have experienced some form of population decrease between 1980 and 2004, compared to the 27.2% which have remained stable and only 0.5% which have experienced an increase (Stuart *et al.*, 2004).

Endemic species (hereafter endemics) are not randomly distributed within their distribution ranges, but are often agglomerated in specific regions or habitats (Kluge and Kessler, 2006). Due to their spatial distributions being

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Endemic species are those entirely restricted to a specified region and, on average, usually possess a narrower geographic range than for a given taxonomic group (Laffan and Crisp, 2003). It has been suggested that such species have a high risk of extinction by chance alone (Gaston, 1994; Myers *et al.*, 2000), as they are confined to limited geographic ranges and their localized habitats are easy perturbed or destroyed, or they tend to be scarce within their ranges (Brooks *et al.*, 2002; Zhang, 2011). Thus, they become one of the most effective surrogates for identifying conservation priorities or hotspots, and should be urgently targeted for conservation, management and exploration of the underlying mechanisms of biogeographic patterns (Myers *et al.*, 2000; Sodhi *et al.*, 2008; Hu *et al.*, 2011).

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important to our understanding and conservation of biodiversity, it has become a critical issue to analyze species richness and endemism using observational and specimen data (Myers *et al.*, 2000; Crisp *et al.*, 2001; Hopper and Gioia, 2004; Hu *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, the formation of endemics is complicated and closely related to geology, climate, and the process of bioevolution. Therefore, studies on endemics and their distribution patterns are of great importance to learn about the traits, components, origin and evolution of the local fauna, and are also critical in studies of biodiversity and conservation (Jiang, 1997).

China is considered as one of the important biodiversity centers in the world (Myers et al., 2000; Zhang, 2011). With its large area, diversified topography, and varied climates and habitats, China has a high degree of species diversity and endemism (Xie et al., 2007; Zhang, 2011). However, percentages of vertebrate endemics in China are uneven across taxonomic groups (Fei et al., 2010a; Zhang, 2011). In contrast with the endemism levels of about 8% in birds (Lei et al., 2003) and about 18% in mammals (Smith and Xie, 2008), current knowledge points to higher level of amphibian endemism with 63% (Jiang et al., 2010). Moreover, most endemic amphibians are rare and endangered or with great significance in phylogeny and systematics (Xie et al., 2007; Fei et al., 2010b; Hu et al., 2011). Chen et al. (2008) also indicate that amphibians seem to be a better indicator of zoogeographic division than either mammals

Taxonomic revision and recognition of new species of amphibians has occurred substantially in China (e. g., Fei et al., 2010b; Nishikawa et al., 2011a, b; Yang et al., 2011). Presently, 389 amphibian species are recognized in this country, belonging to 78 genera in 13 families and three orders (Jiang et al., 2010; Hu and Jiang, unpublished data). The importance of endemic amphibians to planning the conservation of biodiversity has been emphasized (Xie et al., 2007; Fei et al., 2010a). Although previous studies related to endemic amphibians in China are scatteredly mentioned in literature (e. g., Xie et al., 2007; Fei et al., 2010a; Zhang, 2011), endemism has not been spatially explored in any detail at the national scale (Jiang et al., 2010), except for regional amphibians (Fu et al., 2006). Moreover, endemic species numbers have been underestimated in these studies due to the omission of some species and recognition of new species after being published and the inconsistent opinions in validity of some species among herpetologists. To understand the diversity and spatial distributions of the endemic amphibians in China, we aim to: 1) revise the checklist of endemic amphibians, 2) reveal their geographic distributions at a regional scale (i. e., administrative provinces and zoogeographic realm), and 3) document the elevational patterns of species richness. Our study will not only help to understand the general mechanisms for distributions of Chinese endemic amphibians, but also guide conservation planning for these endemics.

2. Methods

2.1 Database Although it is difficult to estimate the exact geographic range of a single species, we can confirm the provinces or zoogeographic realms where amphibians species occur. We generated a spatial database of the distribution of endemic amphibians in China as the basis for this study. Data on geographic distributions were obtained from the following sources: 1) specimen records from museums, mainly the Herpetological Museum of Chengdu Institute of Biology (CIB), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS); 2) amphibian and/or herpetological fauna (Fei et al., 2006, 2009a, b; Yang and Rao, 2008; Shi et al., 2011); 3) herpetological monographs and current literature (Zhao and Adler, 1993; Nishikawa et al., 2009, 2011a, b; Fei et al., 2010a; Yang et al., 2011); and 4) the results of our field surveys during the 1970s-2000s by the members of the Evolution and Biodiversity Conservation Research Group of CIB, CAS. Species taxonomy mainly followed Fei et al. (2006, 2009a, b, 2010a, b) and partially followed Frost (2011). The recent changes in the classification of amphibians based on phylogenetic relationships were fully considered and some modifications were made (Jiang et al., 2010).

We recognized endemics referenced in Fei et al. (2006, 2009a, b, 2010a) and Frost (2011), which represents those only known to occur in China until now. The data of elevational distributions (minimal and maximal elevation of occurrences) for each species were compiled through an exhaustive search of the primary literature and museum collections, and complemented with field records.

2.2 Statistical analysis The map of China (1:4 000 000) was digitized to produce a geographic units (provinces) map using ArcGIS 9.2 (ESRI, Redland, USA). It was then overlaid with distribution maps to determine the distributions of endemics in each province. Because most records of endemics were documented for provinces but not for municipality cities and special administrative regions, we incorporated Tianjin and Beijing into Hubei Province, Shanghai into Jiangsu Province, Chongqing

into Sichuan Province, and Hongkong and Macao into Guangdong Province when analyzing. China covers parts of the Oriental and Palaearctic zoogeographic realms, including seven regions: Northeastern Region, Northern China Region, Inner Mongolia-Xinjiang Region, Qinhai-Xizang Region, Southwestern Region, Central China Region and Southern China Region. As each of these regions consists of 2–5 subregions (Zhang, 2011), we compiled the species richness for each subregion. Additionally, we considered a species to have a narrow distribution if its range covers \leq 4 provinces or subregions, while a wide distribution was considered to be one that covers \geq 4 provinces or subregions (Jiang *et al.*, 2010).

To examine the relationship between species richness of amphibians and elevation, we divided the elevation into 100 m bands and calculated the number of species in each band. The mean and the difference between the minimum and maximum elevations of occurrence reported for each species were used to represent its elevational midpoint and breadth. To overcome statistical non-independence of the spatial data, we used the 'midpoint method' as a measure of the central tendency (Hu et al., 2011). We explored the relationships between the species richness of endemics and their altitudinal ranges using the simple ordinary least squares (OLS) model by Origin 7.5 (OriginLab Corporation, Northampton). $P \le 0.05$ was considered statistically significant. Furthermore, for all endemic amphibians, two-dimensional histograms were used to depict the continuous variation of elevation range profiles for range maxima (upper limit) and minima (lower limit) over 500 m intervals, and for the midpoints and range sizes over 500 m intervals along the altitudinal gradient.

3. Results

3.1 Endemism of amphibians Two hundred and sixty two endemics of amphibians are recognized, belonging to 59 genera in 12 families and two orders (On-line Appendix 1). They account for 67% of the total species of amphibians in China. Across families, Megophryidae possesses the largest number of endemics (65 species), accounting for 25% of all endemic amphibians. It is followed by Ranidae and Rhacophoridae with 64 and 33 endemics, respectively. Considering the endemics of zoogeographic realms, there are more oriental species than palearctics. 244 species are oriental, occupying 93% of all endemics, while only eight species are palearctic, and 10 species are distributed in both the Oriental Realm

and the Palaearctic Realm.

There are 17 genera endemic to China, including Batrachuperus Boulenger, 1878; Dianrana Fei, Ye and Jiang, 2010; Feirana Dubois, 1992; Glandirana Fei, Ye and Huang, 1990; Hypselotriton Wolterstorff, 1934; Liua Zhao and Hu, 1983; Liuhurana Fei, Ye, Jiang, Dubois and Ohler, 2010; Liurana Dubois, 1986; Oreolalax Myers and Leviton, 1962; Pachyhynobius Fei, Qu and Wu, 1983; Pachytriton Boulenger, 1878; Parapelophryne Fei, Ye and Jiang, 2003; Protohynobius Fei and Ye, 2000; Pseudohynobius Fei and Ye, 1983; Pseudorana Fei, Ye and Huang, 1990; Rugosa Fei, Ye and Huang, 1990; and Yerana Jiang, Chen and Wang, 2006 (On-line Appendix 1). For these genera, 17 species are belonging to the genus Oreolalax, with 6 species in both Pachytriton and Hypselotriton, 5 in both Pseudohynobius and Batrachuperus, 4 in Liurana, 3 in Feirana, and 2 in both Liua and Pseudorana. The other genera are all monospecific genus.

3.2 Distribution in provinces and zoogeographic regions The abundance of endemics in provinces can be divided into five levels with a hierarchical diversification, that is, Level I with 44–87 species, including Sichuan, Yunnan, Hunan, Guizhou and Guangxi having a higher diversity of 87, 63, 48, 45 and 44 species, respectively; Level II with 21–30 species, including Guangdong, Hubei, Fujian, Anhui, Zhejiang, Gansu, Xizang, and Taiwan; Level III with 10–19 species, including Hainan, Jiangxi, Henan, Shannxi and Jiangsu; Level IV with 1–6 species, including Qinghai, Hebei, Shandong, *et al.*; Level V with no endemics, including Heilongjiang and Jilin. Among the provinces in Level IV, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Liaoning all have only one species of endemic amphibians (Figure 1).

At the level of genus, both Sichuan and Yunnan have the highest diversity with 31 genera. Moreover, the hierarchical order from highest to lowest for genus is Sichuan/Yunnan > Guizhou > Hunan > Hubei > Guangxi > Zhejiang..., and that for family is Yunnan > Sichuan > Guangxi > Guizhou > Hubei > Anhui > Guangdong... (Figure 1). There is no endemic amphibian family in China.

Alternatively, among zoogeographic subregions, whether at the level of genus or species, the Western Mountains and Plateau Subregion, Southwest China Mountains Subregion, and Eastern Plain and Upland Subregion have higher diversity than any of the others. In the sequence, there are 77, 74 and 56 species within these subregions, respectively. The Southern Yunnan Subregion follows with 31 species. Other subregions have

1–25 species, while the Daxing'an Mountains Subregion, Changbai Mountains Subregion and South China Sea Archipelago Subregion have no known endemics. At the level of family with endemics, the Southern Yunnan Subregion has the highest diversity, followed by the Southwest China Mountains Subregion, and Western Mountains and Plateau Subregion (Figure 2).

There are 232 (89% of the endemic amphibians in China) and 258 (98%) endemics whose distribution ranges cover ≤ 4 provinces and subregions, respectively. Within them, 155 and 211 species only occur in a single province or subregion. For example, Feirana kangxianensis, Rana kunyuensis, Scutiger ningshanensis, Pseudepidalea taxkorensis and Hynobius chinensis are

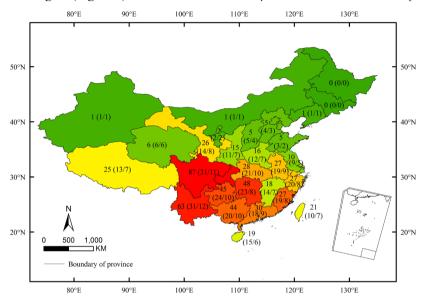


Figure 1 Distribution patterns of endemic species of amphibians in different provinces of China. The numbers in parentheses represent, respectively, the numbers of genus and family that the endemic species belong to.

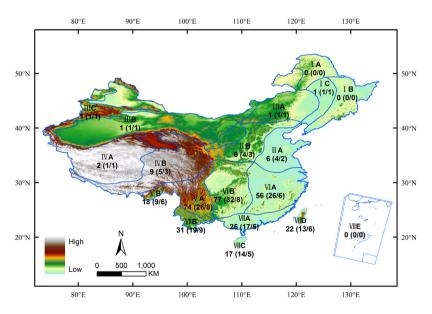


Figure 2 The abundance of endemic species of amphibians in different zoo-geographic subregions of China. The numbers in parentheses represent, respectively, the numbers of genus and family that the endemic species belong to. I: Northeastern China Region (A: Daxing'an Mountains Subregion; B: Changbai Mountains Subregion; C: Songliao Plain Subregion); II: Northern China Region (A: Yellow River-Huai River Plain Subregion; B: Loess Plateau Subregion); III: Inner Mongolia-Xinjiang Region (A: Eastern Grass Land Subregion; B: Western Arid Subregion; C: Tianshan Mountains Subregion); IV: Qinhai-Xizang Region (A: Qiangtang Plateau Subregion; B: Qinghai-Southern Xizang Subregion); V: Southwestern China Region (A: Southwest China Mountains Subregion; B: Himalaya Mountains Subregion); VI: Central China Region (A: Eastern Plain and Upland Subregion; B: Western Mountains and Plateau Subregion); VII: Southern China Region (A: Coastal Fujian, Guangxi and Guangdong Subregion; B: Southern Yunnan Subregion; C: Hainan Island Subregion; D: Taiwan Island Subregion; E: South China Sea Archipelago Subregion). The A–E after I–VII represent subregions, following Zhang (2011).

only found in Gansu, Shandong, Shannxi, Xinjiang and Hubei, respectively. Xenophrys huangshanensis and Pachytriton feii are both only distributed in Anhui; Echinotriton chinhaiensis, H. viwuensis and H. amjiensis are all only in Zhejiang; Amolops daiyunensis, Odorrana huanggangensis, Glandirana minima and Hypselotriton fudingensis only in Fujian; and more other species, such as O. kuangwuensis, X. wawuensis, and Batrachuperus londongensis only in Sichuan, and H. wolterstorffi, Oreolalax jingdongensis, and Feihyla fuhua only in Yunnan. Only six species (2%) have the ranges covering ≥10 provinces. Across provinces, 34 endemics restrict their distributions to Yunnan, followed by Sichuan with 27 species. For the endemic genera, only Batrachuperus and Feirana are distributed in the Palaearctic Realm partially and all the other genera are endemic to the Oriental Realm. Specifically, Protohynobius, Parapelophryne, Glandirana and Liurana are restricted to Sichuan, Hainan, Fujian, and Xizang, respectively (Figure 1).

3.3 Elevational patterns of species richness and range size Endemic amphibians of China are distributed over a large spectrum of elevation from 0–4 500 m. The relationship between the species richness and elevational gradient shows a bell curve pattern with a normal distribution (Figure 3). Endemics increase in number steeply when elevation increases from 100 m to 800 m and then reach the peak. Whereafter, endemics decrease with the elevation increasing from 800 m to 2 800 m, and only about 30 species occur in an elevation band ranging from 2 800 m to 3 300 m. Endemics further decrease and finally only one species can be found at the elevation up to 4 500 m (Figure 3).

Seventy eight endemics (about 30% of the Chinese endemic amphibians) are distributed over large elevational ranges ($\geq 1~000$ m). Among them, *Andrias davidianus*, *A*.

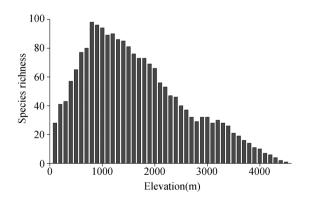


Figure 3 The species richness of endemic amphibians along the elevational gradients in China.

mantzorum, Batrachuperus tibetanus, Bufo bankorensis have elevation ranges over 2 500 m. 36 endemics (14%) are distributed at and above 3 000 m. A. davidianus, B. karlschmidti, B. tibetanus, B. yenyuanensis, B. tibetanus, Nanorana pleskei, N. ventripunctata, Scutiger glandulatus, and Scutiger mammatus have the highest elevation distribution over 4 000 m. On the other hand, Echinotriton chinhaiensis, Hyla zhaopingensis, H. yiwuensis, Nidirana hainanensis, Rana kunyuensis, O. macrotympana, Pelophylax plancyi, Sylvirana hekouensis and X. brachykolos are typical species with low elevation (≤ 400 m). The distribution patterns also show that most of the endemics occur in areas of low to middle elevations ranging from 700 m to 1 500 m.

Correlation between the richness of endemics and the elevation range is well explained by a simple ordinary least squares (OLS) model (R = 0.725, P = 3.495E-8; Figure 4). Additionally, the continuous variation shown by elevation range profiles can be made discrete for range maxima and minima for all endemics ending at 4 500 m (Figure 5). Most endemics (79%) are depicted as reaching their range maxima at low to middle elevation $(\leq 2\,500\,\mathrm{m})$, and very few surpass the elevation of 4 000 m. Ninety two endemics (35%) exhibit the combination of range maxima and minima. Relatively large numbers of endemics exclusive to highlands (the cell farthest to the right) and diminishing numbers of species that extend from highlands to lower elevation zone are clear traces of a distinctive highland amphibians. A great proportion of endemics (85%) have their lower limits below 2 000 m, while only five species are with their lower limits above 3 000 m.

The relationship between the range size and midpoint of the elevation range reveals a triangular distribution for Chinese endemic amphibians (Figure 6). The endemics at mid elevations display the complete range sizes, while

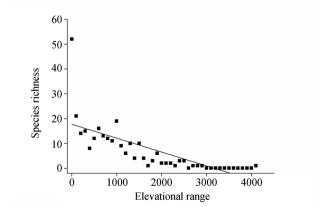


Figure 4 Correlation scatter-plots for species richness with the elevational range for endemic amphibian species in China.

those at lower or higher elevations possess only small range sizes.

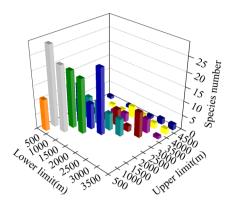


Figure 5 Correlation scatter-plots for species richness with the elevational range for endemic amphibian species in China.

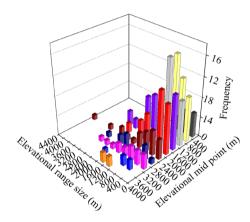


Figure 6 Two-dimensional histograms of elevational range limits for endemic amphibian species in China. The color spectrum represents the elevational gradients.

4. Discussion

4.1 Endemic amphibians and their distributions in

China Owing to the many high mountains and deep river valleys along with the diversified landforms and climates across a vast area, China has varied and complicated ecological environments, which has enabled amphibians to adapt to the diverse habitats and thus form the unique distribution patterns (Fei et al. 2006, 2009a, b). The identification of new species has increased the number of endemic amphibians in China over the past several decades (e. g., Zhao and Adler, 1993; Fei et al., 2008; Nishikawa et al., 2011b; Yang et al., 2011). For example, Xie et al. (2007) recorded 215 species of endemic amphibians, Fei et al. (2010a), 233 endemics and presently we have recognized 262 endemics in China. In this study, we present the first systematic

analysis of endemic amphibians in China, which would give us a better understanding of the endemism and the distributions of amphibians in China.

Previous biogeographic studies on amphibians in China mainly focused on threatened species, diversity across all species, or elevational patterns of regional frogs (Fu et al., 2006; Xie et al., 2007; Jiang et al., 2010). It is suggested that the level of available survey efforts, the consequent number of records available for assessment, and the identification of new species can strongly influence biogeographic assessments (Slatyer et al., 2007). Molecular analyses are increasingly used in systematics and some species complexes or cryptic species are recognized (e. g., Nishikawa et al., 2011b; Yang et al., 2011). Concurrently, substantial field efforts for amphibians have been launched in recent years in China. Such efforts have dramatically increased the records available for analyzing the distributions of amphibians and providing information of unsurveyed or poorly surveyed areas. Jiang et al. (2010) indicated that the greatest species richness occurred in the family Ranidae, followed by Megophryidae. However, in this study, Megophryidae is found with the largest number of endemics, and Ranidae is the second. This discrepancy may be due to the different distribution characteristics between these two families: the proportion of species with narrow distributions in the Megophryidae is higher than that in the Ranidae. Among provinces, Sichuan is shown to have the largest number of threatened amphibians (Xie et al., 2007) and endemic birds (Lei et al., 2003), while Heilongjiang and Jilin are located in the region of low species diversity (Xie et al., 2007). This pattern is coincident with that of endemic amphibians uncovered here.

We can define the endemics which are limited to small, narrow regions or in discontinuous regions as species with regional or discontinued distributions (Lei et al., 2003). For example, O. jingdongensis is only distributed in Jingdong, Shuangbai, and Xinping counties of Yunnan, even if there are wide similar habitats around their known distribution sites (Fei et al., 2009a). The difference between the 'actual distribution areas' and 'potential distribution areas' may inevitably occur (Hu and Jiang, 2010). Except for some determined new differentiation patterns, the explanation for the locally distributed endemics is mostly human activities or that the species are at a natural decline state (Hu and Jiang, 2010; Zhang, 2011). Additionally, the isolated discontinuous distribution is also a normal phenomenon of local distribution. For example, H. orientalis is widely

distributed from eastern coastal to the central mainland of China, but its congener, H. chenggongensis, can only be encountered in Chenggong County, Yunnan (Fei et al., 2006; 2010a). Another example is the genus Feirana. F. quadranus is widely distributed in the Wuling Moutains, Daba Mountains, Shennongjia, Longmen Mountains, and the central and western Qinling Mountains, while F. taihangnica in the central and eastern Qinling Mountains, Zhongtiao Mountains, and southern Taihang Mountains (Wang et al., 2009; Yang et al., 2011; Hu and Jiang, unpublished data). The central Qinling Mountains are suggested as the sympatric areas between these two species of Feirana (Wang et al., 2009). However, F. kangxianensis, which is closely related to F. taihangnica, is currently known to only occur in Kangxian County, Gansu, and is discontinuously distributed in those areas of F. taihangnica (Yang et al., 2011). The mainland, Taiwan Island and Hainan Island of China have similar or related species, which are also discontinuously distributed with a representative example of the genus Hynobius. H. arisanensis, H. formosanus, H. fuca, H. glacialis, and H. sonani are endemic to Taiwan Island, while H. amjiensis, H. guabangshanensis, H. maoershanensis, and H. viwuensis occur in Anji County of Zhejiang, Qiyang County of Hunan, Longshen and Xing'an counties of Guangxi, and Zhenhai, Yiwu, Wenling, Jiangshan, Xiaoshan and Zhoushan counties of Zhejiang, respectively (Shen et al., 2004; Fei et al., 2006, 2010a; Zhou et al., 2006; Lai and Lue, 2008). These distribution patterns may relate to the appearance of several ice ages in the Quaternary or the vicariance events (Fei et al., 2006; Zeisset and Beebee, 2008).

4.2 Elevational patterns of species richness and range size The understanding of the distribution patterns of species richness along elevational gradients is crucial to developing a general theory on species diversity (Rowe, 2009). Our results show that the endemic amphibians in China are not evenly distributed along the elevational gradients, with the richest species being at elevations between 800-1 200 m. Looking at a wide geographic range for frog taxa, Hu et al. (2011) suggested that midelevations (around 1 500 m) in Asia are richer in endemics of spiny frogs than the lower and higher elevations. In this study, the substantial decrease of endemic amphibians towards high elevations (> 3 000 m) further supports this pattern. Similar patterns are also documented in the frogs of the Hengduan Mountains (Fu et al., 2006). It can be interpreted as a reflection of the complex topographic configuration of China, where many montane habitats possess varied and complicated ecological environments.

Accumulations of endemics are likely to be found in the highly diversified habitats. This fact indicates that the amphibian community composition pattern is strongly influenced by the basins with stepped landforms (Fei *et al.*, 2009b; Zhang, 2011).

Distribution ranges of species result from complex interactions among many factors, including physiological traits, history of speciation and dispersal, and constraints from continental shape (Webb and Gaston, 2003). The fact that the richness of endemic amphibians in China decreases with increasing elevational range indicates that most endemics possess narrow elevational ranges. In particular, many endemics exhibit the combination of lower and upper limits. Here, a triangular pattern is found for the relationship between range sizes and midpoints of elevation, and species at intermediate elevations have the broadest amplitudes. The results complement other evidences showing a need for further testing the generality of the Rapoport's altitudinal effect (Patterson *et al.*, 1998; Hu *et al.*, 2011).

5. Conclusions

Endemism is inherently scale dependent and sensitive to the delineation of boundaries (Lomolino et al., 2006). Therefore, we should delimit the distributions of endemic taxa ideally using natural and geographic boundaries rather than administrative boundaries. Moreover, two types of errors (i. e., the overweighting of the widespread species regarded in the literature but with few observational records; the erroneous records for species with narrow recorded ranges which create comparatively high endemism scores in wrong places), should be emphasized when the distributions of endemics are being interpreted (Slatyer et al., 2007). Despite these issues, exploring the patterns of endemism and the distributions of endemics is important for understanding regional characters, compositions and evolutionary process of fauna, and also is of particular interest in the development of integrative conservation strategies (Jablonski, 1986; Grau et al., 2007). Amphibians with restricted ranges should be urgently protected (Sodhi et al., 2008). Therefore, China which is one of the countries with richest endemic species needs to pay immediate attention to conservation (Xie et al., 2007). For example, it is urgently necessary to launch conservation plans urgently for F. kangxianensis, given its restricted distribution range and great existence risk under the pressure of intense human activities (Yang et al., 2011; Hu and Jiang, unpublished data). Besides

the endemic amphibian species, there are 17 endemic genera in China with some monospecific genera. They are especially important for the evolutionary process and need conservation, because the extinction of one species means that all of the genus will disappear. Unfortunately, China's natural habitats, particularly forests, have suffered severe degradation because of increasingly intensive human activities (Xie et al., 2007; Jiang et al., 2010). Thus, we still use administrative boundaries to delimit endemic amphibians and refer to endemic taxa as those only occurring within China's borders. Alternatively, we can use alternative methodologies for generating distribution maps and range sizes for the endemics, such as using predictive spatial modeling which would reduce the problem of an undersampled species range (Hu et al., 2010; Hu and Jiang, 2011). To be brief, this study can promote our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of distribution patterns of amphibians in China, and highlights a need to launch conservation programs for Chinese endemic amphibians due to their narrow distribution ranges and the potential threats.

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1 Endemic amphibians and their distribution in China

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5 Appendix 1

4

6 The catalog of endemic species of amphibians in China.

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
CAUDATA	Hynobiidae	Protohynobius Fei and Ye, 2000	P. puxiongensis Fei and Ye, 2000
	Cope, 1859	Hynobius Tschudi, 1838	H. amjiensis Gu, 1992
			H. arisanensis Maki, 1922
			H. chinensis Günther, 1889
			H. formosanus Maki, 1922
			H. fuca Lai and Lue, 2008
			H. glacialis Lai and Lue, 2008
			H. guabangshanensis Shen, 2004
			H. maoershanensis Zhou, Jiang, and Jiang, 2006
			H. sonani Maki, 1922
			H. yiwuensis Cai, 1985
		Pachyhynobius Fei, Qu, and Wu, 1983	P. shangchengensis Fei, Qu, and Wu, 1983
		Pseudohynobius Fei and Ye,	P. flavomaculatus Hu and Fei, 1978
		1983	P. guizhouensis Li, Tian and Gu, 2010
			P. jinfo Wei, Xiong, and Zeng, 2009
			P. kuankuoshuiensis Xu, Zeng, and Fu, 2007
			P. shuichengensis Tian, Li, and Gu, 1998
		Liua Zhao and Hu, 1983	L. shihi Liu, 1950

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			L. tsinpaensis Liu and Hu, 1966
		Batrachuperus Boulenger, 1878	B. londongensis Liu and Tian, 1978
			B. pinchonii David, 1872
			B. karlschmidti Liu, 1950
			B. tibetanus Schmidt, 1925
			B. yenyuanensis Liu, 1950
	Cryptobranchidae Fitzinger, 1826	Andrias Tschudi, 1837	A. davidianus Blanchard, 1871
	Salamandroidae	Tylototriton Anderson, 1871	T. hainanensis Fei, Ye, and Yang, 1984
	Goldfuss, 1820		T. kweichowensis Fang and Chang, 1932
			T. taliangensis Liu, 1950
			T. wenxianensis Fei, Ye, and Yang, 1984
		Echinotriton Nussbaum and Brodie, 1982	E. chinhaiensis Chang, 1932
		Paramesotriton Chang, 1935	P. caudopunctatus Liu and Hu, 1973
			P. chinensis Gray, 1859
			P. fuzhongensis Wen, 1989
			P. guanxiensis Huang, Tang, and Tang, 1983
			P. hongkongensis Myers and Leviton, 1962
			P. labiatus Unterstein, 1930
			P. longliensis Li, Tian, Gu, and Xiong, 2008
			P. yunwuensis Wu, Jiang, et. Hanken 2010
			P. zhijinensis Li, Tian, and Gu, 2008
		Pachytriton Boulenger, 1878	P. archospotus Shen, Shen, and Mo, 2008
			P. brevipes Sauvage, 1876

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			P. inexpectatus Nishikawa, Jiang, Matsui et Mo, 2010
			P. granulosus Chang, 1935
			P. feii sp. nov. Nishikawa, Jiang and Matsui, 2011
			P. moi sp. nov. Nishikawa, Jiang and Matsui, 2011
		Hypselotriton Wolterstorff,	H. chenggongensis Kou and Xing, 1983
		1934	H. cyanurus Liu, Hu, and Yang, 1962
			H. fudingensis Wu, Wang, Jiang, and Hanken, 2010
			H. orientalis David, 1873
			H. orphicus Risch, 1983
			H. wolterstorffi Boulenger, 1905
ANURA	Bombinatoridae Gray,	Bombina Oken, 1816	B. fortinuptialis Hu and Wu, 1978
	1825		B. lichuanensis Fei and Ye, 1995
			B. microdeladigitora Liu, Hu and Yang, 1960
			B. maxima Boulenger, 1905
	Megophryidae	Oreolalax Myers and Leviton,	O. chuanbeiensis Tian, 1983
	Bonaparte, 1850	1962	O. granulosus Fei, Ye, and Chen, 1990
			O. jingdongensis Ma, Yang, and Li, 1983
			O. liangbeiensis Liu and Fei, 1979
			O. lichuanensis Hu and Fei, 1979
			O. major Liu and Hu, 1960
			O. multipunctatus Wu, Zhao, Inger, and Shaffer, 1993
			O. nanjiangensis Fei, Ye, and Li, 1999
			O. omeimontis Liu and Hu, 1960
			O. pingii Liu, 1943
			O. popei Liu, 1947

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			O. puxiongensis Liu and Fei, 1979
			O. rhodostigmatus Hu and Fei, 1979
			O. rugosus Liu, 1943
			O. schmidti Liu, 1947
			O. weigoldi Vogt, 1924
			O. xiangchengensis Fei and Huang, 1983
		Scutiger Theobald, 1868	S. chintingensis Liu and Hu, 1960
			S. glandulatus Liu, 1950
			S. gongshanensis Yang and Su, 1979
			S. jiulongensis Fei, Ye, and Jiang, 1995
			S. liupanensis Huang, 1985
			S. maculatus Liu, 1950
			S. mammatus Günther, 1896
			S. muliensis Fei and Ye, 1986
			S. ningshanensis Fang, 1985
			S. pingwuensis Liu and Tian, 1978
			S. tuberculatus Liu and Fei, 1979
			S. wanglangensis Ye and Fei, 2007
		Leptobrachium Tschudi, 1838	L. L. guangxiense Fei, Mo, Ye and Jiang, 2009
			L. L. hainanense Ye and Fei, 1993
			L. V.boringii Liu, 1945
			L. V. promustache Rao, Wilkinson, and Zhang, 2006
			L. V. leishanense Liu and Hu, 1973
			L. V. liui Pope, 1947
		Paramegophrys Liu, 1964	P. alpinus Fei, Ye, and Li, 1990

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			P. liui Fei and Ye, 1990
			P. oshanensis Liu, 1950
			P. ventripunctatus Fei, Ye, and Li, 1990
		Brachytarsophrys Tian and Hu,	B. chuannanensis Fei, Ye, and Huang, 2001
		Xenophrys Günther, 1864	X. baolongensis Ye, Fei, and Xie, 2007
			X. binchuanensis Ye and Fei, 1995
			X. binlingensis Jiang, Fei, and Ye, 2009
			X. boettgeri Boulenger, 1899
			X. brachykolos Inger and Romer, 1961
			X. caudoprocta Shen, 1994
			X. daweimontis Rao and Yang, 1997
			X. gigantica Liu, Hu, and Yang, 1960
			X. huangshanensis Fei and Ye, 2005
			X. jingdongensis Fei and Ye, 1983
			X. kuatunensis Pope, 1929
			X. mangshanensis Fei and Ye, 1990
			X. medogensis Fei and Ye, 1983
			X. nankiangensis Liu and Hu, 1966
			X. omeimontis Liu, 1950
			X. pachyproctus Huang, 1981
			X. sangzhiensis Jiang, Ye, and Fei, 2008
			X. shapingensis Liu, 1950
			X. shuichengensis Tian, Gu, and Sun, 2000
			X. spinata Liu and Hu, 1973

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			X. wawuensis Fei, Jiang, and Zheng, 2001
			X. wuliangshanensis Ye and Fei, 1995
			X. wushanensis Ye and Fei, 1995
			X. zhangi Ye and Fei, 1992
			X. tuberogranulatus Mo, Shen, Li, et. 2010
	Bufonidae Gray, 1825	Bufo Garsault, 1764	B. cryptotympanicus Liu et Hu, 1962
			B. bankorensis Barbour, 1908
			B. tibetanus Zarevsky, 1926
			B. tuberculatus Zarevsky, 1926
		Torrentophryne Yang, 1996	T. ailaoanus Kou, 1984
			T. aspinius Rao and Yang, 1994
			T. luchumicus Yang and Rao, 2008
			T. menglianus Yang, 2008
			T. tuberospinius Yang, Liu, and Rao, 1996
		Ingerophrynus Frost, Grant,	
		Faivovich, Bain, Haas, Haddad,	
		de Sá, Channing, Wilkinson,	
		Donnellan, Raxworthy,	I. ledongensis Fei, Ye, and Huang, 2009
		Campbell, Blotto, Moler,	
		Drewes, Nussbaum, Lynch,	
		Green, and Wheeler, 2006	
		Pseudepidalea Frost, Grant,	
		Faivovich, Bain, Haas, Haddad,	P. taxkorensis Fei, Ye and Huang, 1999
		de Sá, Channing, Wilkinson,	
		Donnellan, Raxworthy,	P. zamdaensis Fei, Ye, and Huang, 1999

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
		Campbell, Blotto, Moler,	
		Drewes, Nussbaum, Lynch,	
		Green, and Wheeler, 2006	
		Parapelophryne Fei, Ye, and	P. scalpta Liu and Hu, 1973
		Jiang, 2003	
	Hylidae Rafinesque,	Hyla Laurenti, 1768	H. chinensis Günther, 1858
	1815		H. gongshanensis Jerdon, 1870
			H. immaculata Boettger, 1888
			H. sanchiangensis Pope, 1929
			H. tsinlingensis Liu and Hu, 1966
			H. zhaopingensis Tang and Zhang, 1984
	Ranidae	Rana Linnaeus, 1758	R. chaochiaoensis Liu, 1946
	Rafinesque-Schmaltz,		R. chensinensis David, 1875
	1814		R. chevronta Hu and Ye, 1978
			R. culaiensis Li, Lu, and Li, 2008
			R. hanluica Shen, Jiang, and Yang, 2007
			R. kukunoris Nikolskii, 1918
			R. kunyuensis Lu and Li, 2002
			R. longicrus Stejneger, 1898
			R. zhenhaiensis Ye, Fei, and Matsui, 1995
			R. maoershanensis Lu, Li, and Jiang, 2007
			R. omeimontis Ye and Fei, 1993
			R. sauteri Boulenger, 1909
			R. multidenticulata Chou and Lin, 1997
			R. zhengi Zhao, 1999
	•	•	•

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
		Liuhurana Fei, Ye, Jiang, Dubois and Ohler, 2010	L. shuchinae Liu, 1950
		Pelophylax Fitzinger, 1843	P. fukienensis Pope, 1929
			P. hubeiensis Fei and Ye, 1982
			P. nigrolineatus Liu and Hu,1959
			P. plancyi Lataste, 1880
		Dianrana Fei, Ye and Jiang,	D. pleuraden Boulenger,1904
		Rugosa Fei, Ye and Huang,	R. tientaiensis Chang, 1933
		Glandirana Fei, Ye, and Huang,	G. minima Ting and T'sai, 1979
		Pseudorana Fei, Ye, and	P. sangzhiensis Shen, 1986
		Huang, 1990	P. weiningensis Liu, Hu, and Yang, 1962
		Sylvirana Dubois, 1992	S. bannanica Rao and Yang, 1997
			S. hekouensis Fei, Ye, and Jiang, 2008
			S. latouchii Boulenger, 1899
			S. menglaensis Fei, Ye, and Xie, 2008
			S. nigrotympanica Dubois,1992
			S. spinulosa Smith, 1923
		Nidirana Dubois, 1992	N. daunchina Chang, 1933
			N. hainanensis Fei, Ye, and Jiang, 2007
			B. exiliversabilis Li, Ye, and Fei, 2001
		Huang, 2005	B. nasuta Li, Ye, and Fei, 2001
			B. tormota Wu, 1977

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			B. versabilis Liu and Hu, 1962
		Eburana Dubois, 1992	E. swinhoana Boulenger, 1903
		Odorrana Fei, Ye, and Huang,	O. anlungensis Liu and Hu, 1973
		1990	O. cangyuanensis Yang, 2008
			O. hainanensis Fei, Ye, and Li, 2001
			O. hejiangensis Deng and Yu, 1992
			O. huanggangensis Chen, Zhou and Zheng, 2010
			O. kuangwuensis Liu and Hu, 1966
			O. lungshengensis Liu and Hu, 1962
			O. macrotympana Yang, 2008
			O. margaretae Liu, 1950
			O. nanjiangensis Fei, Ye, Xie, and Jiang, 2007
			O. rotodora Yang and Rao, 2008
			O. schmackeri Boettger, 1892
			O. wuchuanensis Xu, 1983
			O. yizhangensis Fei, Ye, and Jiang, 2007
			O. zhaoi Li, Lu, and Rao, 2008
		Amolops Cope, 1865	A. aniqiaoensis Dong, Rao, and Lü, 2005
			A. bellulus Liu, Yang, Ferraris, and Matsui, 2000
			A. daiyunensis Liu and Hu, 1975
			A. granulosus Liu and Hu, 1961
			A. hainanensis Boulenger, 1900
			A. hongkongensis Pope and Romer, 1951
			A. lifanensis Liu, 1945
			A. loloensis Liu, 1950

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
Orucis	i diffines	Genera	
			A. mantzorum David, 1872
			A. medogensis Li and Rao, 2005
			A. torrentis Smith, 1923
			A. wuyiensis Liu and Hu, 1975
	Dicroglossidae	Limnonectes Fitzinger, 1843	L. fragilis Liu and Hu, 1973
	Anderson, 1871		L. fujianensis Ye and Fei, 1994
		Gynandropaa Dubois, 1992	G. liui Dubois, 1986
			G. phrynoides Boulenger, 1920
		Maculopaa Fei, Ye and Jiang,	M. conaensis Fei and Huang, 1981
		2010	M. maculosa Liu, Hu, and Yang, 1960
			M. medogensis Fei and Ye, 1999
		Feirana Dubois, 1992	F. quadranus Liu, Hu, and Yang, 1960
			F. taihangnica Chen and Jiang, 2002
			F. kangxianensis Yang, Wang, Hu and Jiang, 2011
		Nanorana Guenther, 1896	N. pleskei Günther, 1896
			N. ventripunctata Fei and Huang, 1985
		Quasipaa Dubois, 1992	Q. exilispinosa Liu and Hu, 1975
			Q. jiulongensis Huang and Liu, 1985
			Q. robertingeri Wu and Zhao,1995
			Q. shini Ahl, 1930
		Yerana Jiang Chen and Wang,	
		2006	Y. yei Chen, Qu, and Jiang, 2002
	Occidozygidae Fei, Ye,	Taylorana Dubois, 1986	T. liui Yang, 1983
	and Huang, 1990	Liurana Dubois, 1986	L. alpina Huang and Ye, 1997
			L. medogensis Fei, Ye and Huang, 1997
		l	

Orders	Families	Conoro	Species
Orders	rammes	Genera	Species
			L. reticulata Zhao and Li, 1984
			L. xizangensis Hu, 1977
	Rhacophoridae Hoffman	Buergeria Tschudi, 1838	B. oxycephala Boulenger, 1900
	1932		B. robusta Boulenger, 1909
		Gracixalus Delorme, Dubois,	G. jinxiuensis Hu, 1978
		Grosjean, and Ohler, 2005	G. medogensis Ye and Hu, 1984
		Liuixalus Li, Che, Bain, Zhao,	L. hainanus Liu and Wu, 2004
		and Zhang, 2008	L. ocellatus Liu and Hu, 1973
			L. romeri Smith, 1953
		Feihyla Frost, Grant, Faivovich,	
		Bain, Haas, Haddad, de Sá,	
		Channing, Wilkinson,	
		Donnellan, Raxworthy,	F. fuhua Fei, Ye and Jiang, 2010
		Campbell, Blotto, Moler,	
		Drewes, Nussbaum, Lynch,	
		Green, and Wheeler, 2006	
		Pseudophilautus Laurent, 1943	P. menglaensis Kou, 1990
		Kurixalus Ye, Fei, and Dubois,	K. hainanus Zhao, Wang, and Shi, 2005
		1999	K. idiootocus Kuramoto and Wang, 1987
		Theloderma Tschudi, 1838	T. baibengensis Jiang, Fei, and Huang, 2009
			T. kwangsiense Liu and Hu, 1962
		Polypedates Tschudi, 1838	P. impresus Yang, 2008
			P. spinus Yang, 2008
		Rhacophorus Kuhl and Van	R. laoshan Mo, Jiang, Xie, and Ohler, 2008
		Hasselt, 1822	R. translineatus Wu, 1977

Orders	Families	Genera	Species
			R. verrucopus Huang, 1983
			R. leucofasciatus Liu and Hu, 1962
			R. hui Liu, 1945
			R. gongshanensis Yang and Su, 1984
			R. omeimontis Stejneger, 1924
			R. arvalis Lue, Lai, and Chen, 1995
			R. aurantiventris Lue, Lai, and Chen, 1994
			R. moltrechti Boulenger, 1908
			R. prasinatus Mou, Risch, and Lue, 1983
			R. taipeianus Liang and Wang, 1978
			R. chenfui Liu, 1945
			R. hungfuensis Liu and Hu, 1961
			R. minimus Rao, Wilkinson, and Liu, 2006
			R. nigropunctatus Liu, Hu, and Yang, 1962
			R. yaoshanensis Liu and Hu, 1962
			R. yinggelingensis Chou, Lau, and Chan, 2007
	Microhylidae Günther,	Microhyla Tschudi, 1838	M. mixtura Liu and Hu, 1966
	1858	Micryletta Dubois, 1987	M. steinegeri Boulenger, 1909
		Kaloula Gray, 1831	K. rugifera Stejneger, 1924
			K. verrucosa Boulenger, 1904